

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes ☒ **X**  
no ☐

Property Name: H. V. Messenger/John E. Elrick House Inventory Number: CAR-307  
Address: Buena Vista Avenue, 101 City: Federalsburg Zip Code: 21263  
County: Caroline USGS Topographic Map: Federalsburg  
Owner: Noll Is the property being evaluated a district? ☐ yes  
Tax Parcel Number: 420 Tax Map Number: 201 Tax Account ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Project: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Site visit by MHT staff: ☒ no ☐ yes Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Is the property is located within a historic district? ☐ yes ☒ no

*If the property is within a district* District Inventory Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
NR-listed district ☐ yes Eligible district ☐ yes Name of District: \_\_\_\_\_  
Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource ☐ yes ☐ no Non-contributing but eligible in another context ☐ yes

*If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)* Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible ☒ yes ☐ no

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ None

Documentation on the property/district is presented in:  
Federalsburg historic district file

**Description of Property and Eligibility Determination:** *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

H. V. Messenger/John E. Elrick House: southwest corner of West Central Avenue and Buena Vista Avenue. This early 20th c. brick house is unusual in Federalsburg for its eclectic, elaborate design. It was the home of H.V. Messenger, prominent in the tomato canning industry, and by the 1930's owned by John E. Elrick, another local businessman. The house combines elements of the Colonial Revival in detailing, such as voussoirs and keystones, the Mediterranean, in its tile roof, an Oriental Flavor in its roof lines, and Prairie Style form and use of blocks, piers, banding, and deep eaves. It also features a garage in similar design.

The historic resources contained within the Federalsburg Multiple Resource Area (CAR-285) represent aspects of the development resulting from the town's commercial and industrial growth from the mid-19th c. into the early 20th c. Federalsburg, an important Eastern Shore milling, shipbuilding, shipping, and industrial center located at the junction of river, rail, and road routes, experienced its greatest growth in the late 19th c. and early 20th c. This growth is clearly documented in the two districts [CAR-337 & CAR-338] and six individual buildings which have been described...The six individual buildings of National Register quality all have architectural and/or historical significance in Federalsburg's history.  
[Taken from P. Weissman (MHT), 1980. See form for more]

Prepared by: P. Weissman Date Prepared: 10/16/1980

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW**

Eligibility recommended ☒ **X** Eligibility not recommended ☐  
Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ None  
MHT Comments

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

*P. Weissman*  
Reviewer, NR Program

Date

*9/11/02*

Date

## FEDERALSBURG MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA

INTRODUCTION

DO NOT CIRCULATE

This information has been compiled to request a determination of National Register eligibility for historic resources within the Federalburg Multiple Resource Area, for Federalburg's Community Development Block Grant program.

The overall boundaries of the Federalburg Multiple Resource Area are contiguous with the town's present corporate boundaries. Within this area, there are two historic districts, the West District and the East District, and six buildings likely to be eligible individually for the National Register.

The present appearance of much of Federalburg today reflects the town's growth and prosperity in the 19th century as a milling, shipbuilding, shipping, and industrial center. The town's riverside location on the northwest fork of the Nanticoke River, or Marshyhope Creek as it is now called, at an important river crossing led to the development of water powered mills, a shipbuilding industry, and to its popularity as a transportation and shipping center in the 19th century and early 20th century.

The town first grew around the mills on the northern edge of the present town center. Exeter Mill, burnt in the early 20th century, appears to have been in operation since the early 18th century; originally a grist and saw mill operation, the complex later included a carding mill and an iron furnace in the 19th century. The town center itself grew along Main Street and Bridge Street (now Central Avenue). First called "Pine Grove", then "Northwest Fork Bridge" and "Bridge", the town had stores, taverns and churches by the late 18th century. By 1793, the name was changed to Federalburg, probably for the Federalist party.

By the mid-19th century, the saw mills were producing lumber for ships built and launched at the wharves at the south end of town, where trading ships tied up. Nothing remains of this area today. Throughout much of the 19th century, Main and Bridge remained the main streets, and the town had only scattered buildings. In the closing decades of the century, Federalburg enjoyed a period of growth and prosperity, as a result of the town's industrial development in the southern end of town in the area of the newly built railroad tracks. The canning industry was especially important, with tomatoes a leading product. Other small industries located in this area were printing and paper plants and saw and flour mills. The town became a business and industrial center for the surrounding area, due to its shipping facilities by river, railroad and roadways. The town was active in improving its roads, and was proud of its innovative oyster shell roads which aided truck transportation.

The town's industrial growth brought a population increase and a demand for new housing and services. By the turn of the century, Federalburg considered itself one of the Eastern Shore's more progressive smaller towns, with many new buildings, streets, and industries. This growth, and civic improvements such as parks and public utilities, continued into the early decades of the 20th century.

DESCRIPTION

Federalburg's historic resources largely reflect its period of greatest growth from the mid 19th century to the early decades of the 20th century, and are generally residential in character. Few of Federalburg's earliest buildings remain within the limits of the Multiple Resource Area. Located north of Federalburg however, and outside the boundaries of the Multiple Resource Area, are Exeter, on the National Register, Herring Hill, another local landmark, and the site of the Exeter mill complex, all from the town's earlier period.

Within the town, historic resources are concentrated along two of Federalburg's oldest streets. The West District is centered along Main Street and several streets to the west of Main, and the East District is concentrated in the area of East Central Avenue and adjoining streets. The individual sites are located throughout Federalburg, all on the west side of the river.

WEST DISTRICT

The West District includes buildings on both sides of Main Street, from west of the intersection with Park Lane/Old Denton Road, to the intersection with Railroad Avenue on the south. It also includes sections of Park Lane(3) from North Main to Morris Avenue; a section of both sides of Greenridge Street(8), west of Park Lane; and both sides of a section of West Central Avenue(9-12) between Main Street and Park Lane. The district is principally residential in character; the downtown commercial section of Main and Central Avenues is composed of modern commercial buildings, with only a few buildings of architectural or historical significance.(7,13,14)

The northwest edge of the district, on North Main Street (1-7) (Bloomingdale Avenue), is sharply defined by modern houses to the west on Bloomingdale. Similarly, on Greenridge Street, modern houses to the west abruptly mark the end of the district. Most of the houses excluded from the district on the east side of Park Lane, on the block of Greenridge between Main and Park, and on the other residential streets in the area west of Main Street, are either of modern construction or of little architectural quality, and lack cohesiveness in streetscape.

Most of the streets included within the district were among the earliest to be laid out; these streets, and many of the buildings still remaining today, appear on historical atlases of the mid and later 19th century and/or on a USGS quad map of 1905. These streets still largely reflect their turn of the century appearance, with few intrusions or gaps.

Along these streets are good groupings of residences dating from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century, most in good condition and many retaining their original decoration and/or siding. Those with modern siding retain their original form and some decoration. Uniformity of scale, height (2-3 stories), construction (frame) setting (small to medium yards, one story porches, and set near the street) help to unify the following several common house types and create cohesive streetscapes. Several recurring house types

### EAST DISTRICT

/ The East District is a residential area located on the east side of Marshyhope Creek, and is separated from the West District by the river, by several modern commercial buildings on both banks of the river and by open space on the east bank (20). It is comprised of buildings on both sides of most of East Central Avenue, most of both sides of Liberty Street from East Central to Chambers, and a group of buildings along Davis Street. The district is bounded on the south and east by modern houses and new industrial and commercial buildings, and by a group of small plain houses east of the district on East Central Avenue.

East Central Avenue, (21-26) one of the original routes through Federalsburg, still largely reflects its 19th-early 20th century appearance, and presents an unbroken, uniform streetscape of 2-3 story frame houses set close to the road in small-medium size yards, all with one story porches, much like streetscapes in the West District. Liberty Street (27-29) continues this kind of streetscape and like East Central Avenue, most of the houses are of the types, previously described in the West District and in a similar state of preservation. An unusual house in this district is the house at 206 East Central, a Tudor-bungalow combination with double gabled front facade and simulated half-timbering (22). Some of the most substantial houses in the district are located on the West end of East Central nearest the river, as at 120 and 122. (21).

On Davis St., off East Central Avenue, is a group of houses (30-34) of a somewhat different character but visually linked to the rest of the district by a park-like setting and driveway, as well as historical association. These are a group of small frame houses which at one time housed workers at the Davis family poultry and feed company. The Davis family lived nearby on East Central Avenue. This street and buildings appear on the 1905 USGS map. The houses are of two main types: larger gable ended, narrow two story houses with porches, and smaller two story houses with a shed roofed addition to the side. At least one of these, the Davis House at 109 A. Davis St. was moved here from Central Avenue in 1963 (30). The main 1½ story section of it has been described as an important example of early domestic architecture and frame construction in Caroline County (MIT survey files). It was probably built by Cain Ross between 1794-1800, and is one of the earliest buildings in Federalsburg. The west two story section is a later addition, and resembles parts of the other buildings in this group.

Most of the buildings in the group are in good condition and retain their original clapboarding: one is shingled. Two are larger in size, and have gable end facades with porches.

### INDIVIDUAL SITES

The Federalsburg Multiple Resource Area also contains the following buildings worthy of individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

H.V. Messenger/John E. Elrick House, southwest corner of West Central Avenue and Buena Vista Avenue. This early 20th century brick house is unusual in Federalsburg for its eclectic, elaborate design. It was the home of H.V. Messenger, prominent in the tomato canning industry, and by the 1930's owned by John E. Elrick, another local businessman. The house combines elements of the Colonial Revival in detailing such as voussoirs and keystones, the Mediterranean, in its tile roof, an Oriental flavor in its roof lines, and Prairie Style form and use of blocks, piers, banding and deep eaves. It also features a garage in similar design.(35)

Homeland, southwest corner of Bank and Charles Streets, the White/Williamson House, was built ca. 1839. It was formerly the Methodist Episcopal Church parsonage and was moved to its present site from a location on Main Street.(36)

Zion Methodist Episcopal Church, Old Denton Road, built in 1913. This frame church, now aluminum sided, has historically served a black congregation. It features stained glass windows, and retains ornamental woodwork in its tower.(37)

Goslin House, 205 West Central Avenue, is a two story frame house with the only mansard roof in Federalsburg, and was originally the home of Senator E. E. Goslin. Prior to the construction of West Central Avenue in the first decade of the 20th century, this property extended as far east as Main Street, and at one time featured extensive lawns and gardens. A wing of this house has been moved to Park Lane (206-208) and the house itself has been aluminum sided.(38)

House, 303 Academy Street, like the house across from it at 304 Academy, (see below) is one of the best of the group of houses of similar age and type on this street. It retains its elaborate wooden porch and decorative gable woodwork. (39)

House, 304 Academy Street, like #303, one of the best in this group, also has a fine wooden porch and wooden gable ornament, as well as a projecting three sided bay unit on the east side.(40)

#### SIGNIFICANCE

The historic resources contained within the Federalsburg Multiple Resource Area represent aspects of the development resulting from the town's commercial and industrial growth from the mid-19th century into the early 20th century. Federalsburg, an important Eastern Shore milling, shipbuilding, shipping and industrial center located at the junction of river, rail and road routes, experienced its greatest growth in the late 19th century and early 20th century. This growth is clearly documented in the two districts and six individual buildings which have been described.

The two districts are primarily residential and contain well-preserved and cohesive groupings of buildings, which retain integrity of design, form, scale, and setting, creating streetscapes in which there are few losses, gaps, or modern intrusions. The six individual buildings of National Register quality all have architectural and/or historical significance in Federalsburg's history.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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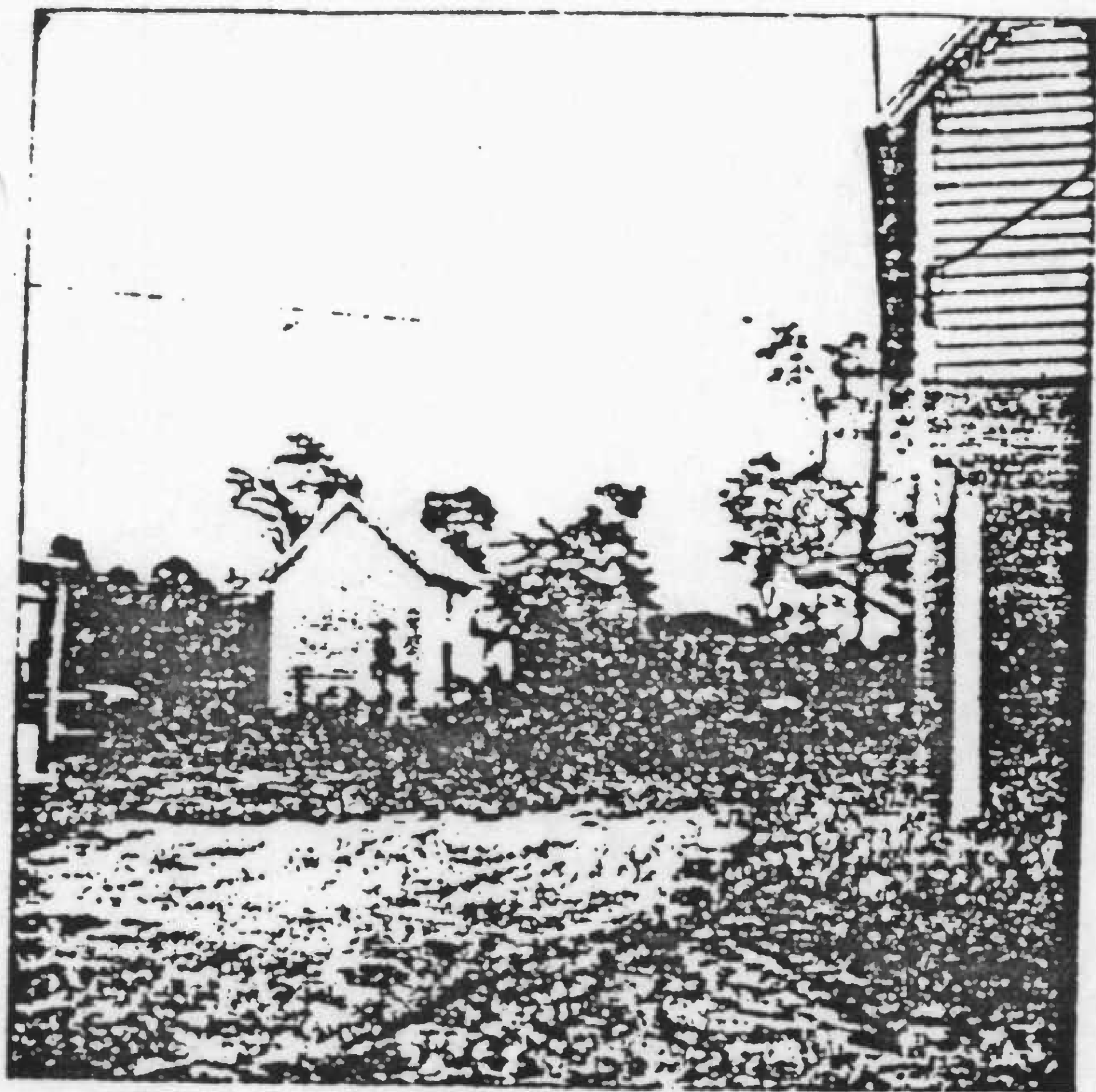
Prepared by:

Peggy Bruns Weissman  
Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House - 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

(301) 269-2438

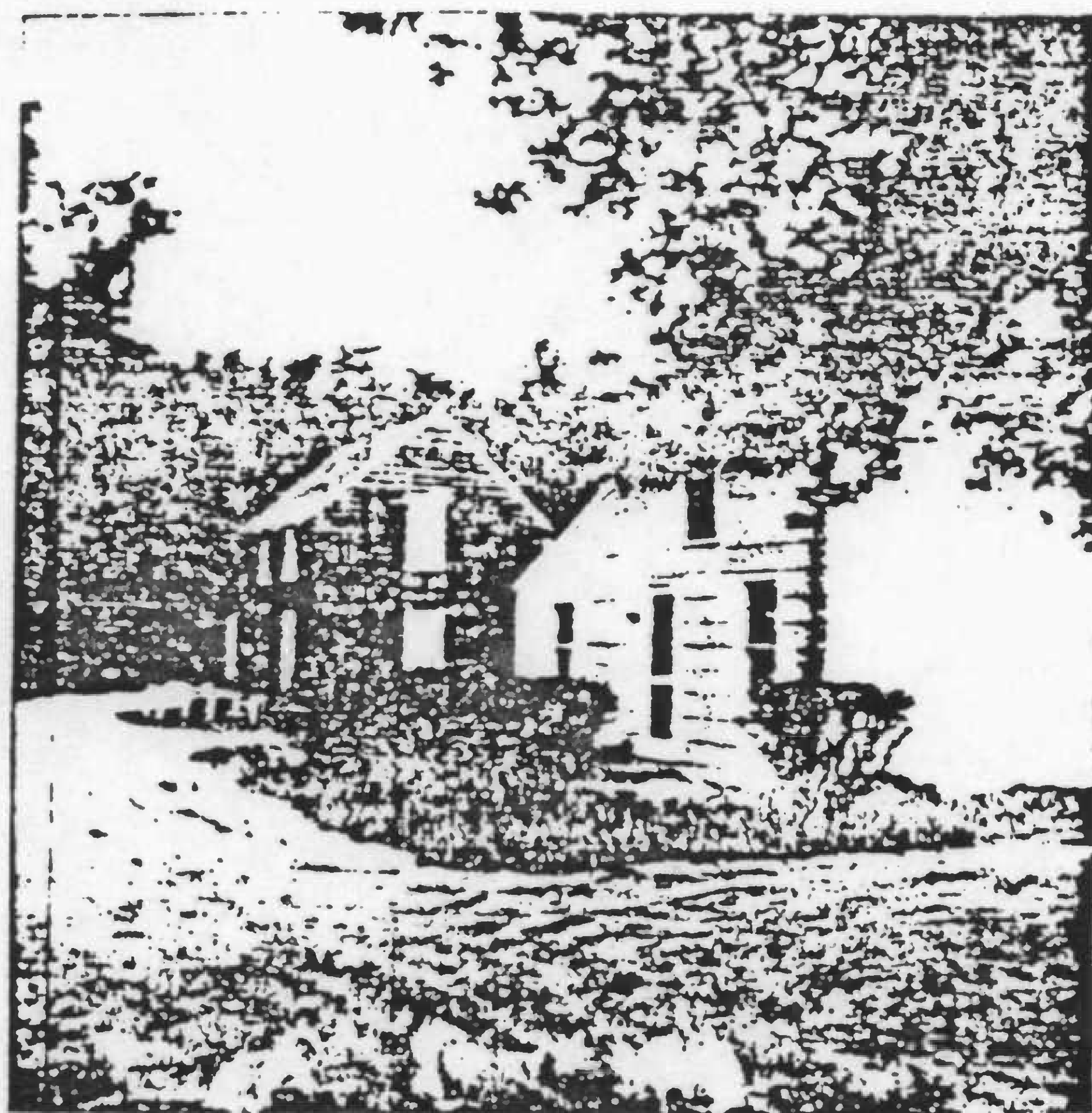
October 16, 1980





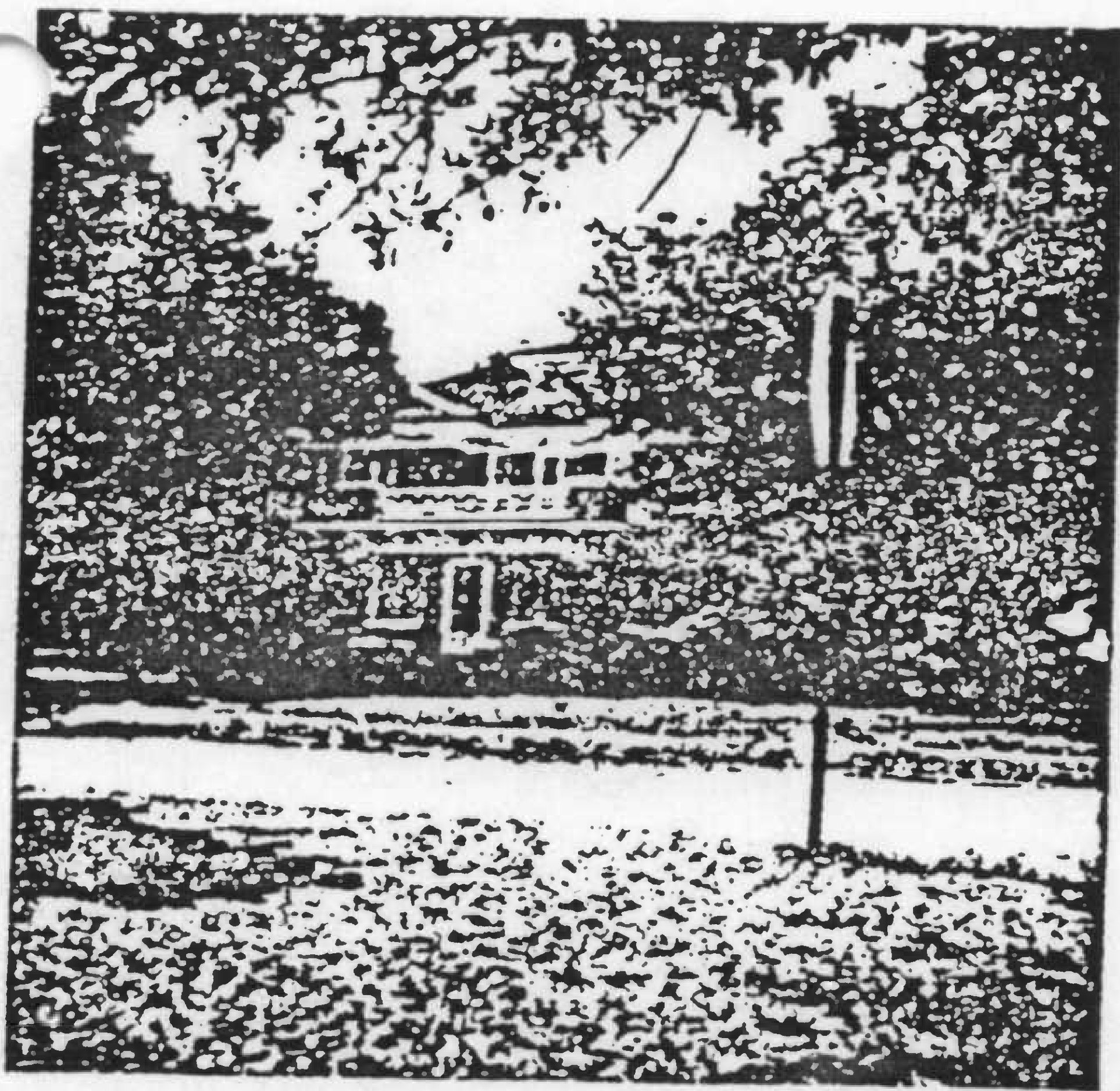
- Davis St., east side, with  
109A in rear

33



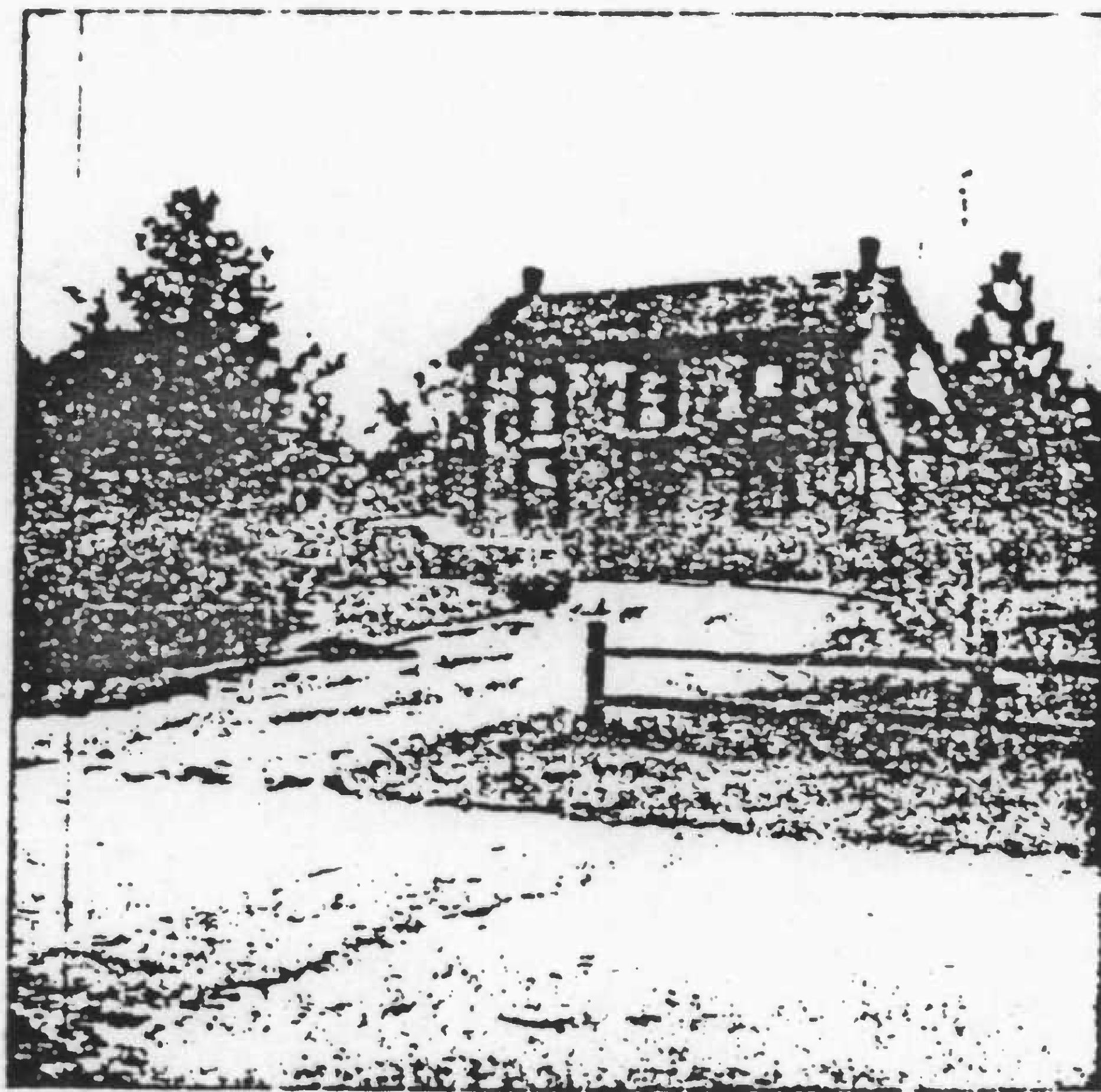
- 119 and 121 Davis Street

34



- H.V. Messenger/J.F. Elrick II's

35



- "Homeland"

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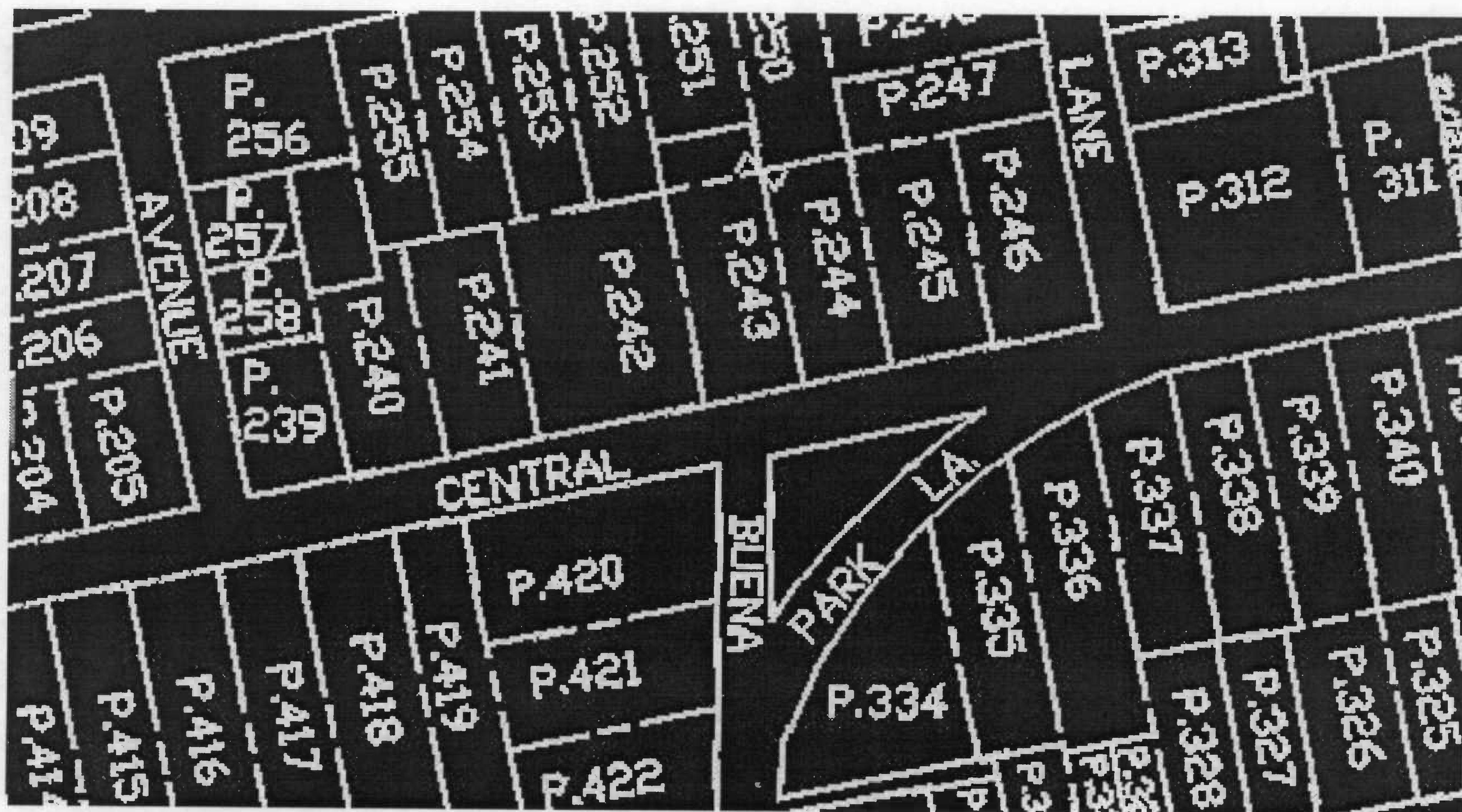




CAR- 307

H.V. MESSENGER/JOHN E. ELRICK HOUSE  
101 BUENA VISTA AVE, FEDERALSBURG  
FEDERALSBURG QUAD, CAROLINE COUNTY

MAP 210 PARCEL# 420





CAR- 307

H.V. MESSENGER/JOHN E. ELRICK HOUSE  
101 BUENA VISTA AVE, FEDERALSBURG  
FEDERALSBURG QUAD, CAROLINE COUNTY

